



Setting energy efficiency standards for large buildings

H.2919, Representative Maria Robinson

S.2011, Senator Rebecca Rausch

An Act to establish building energy performance standards

By using energy more efficiently, we can reduce harmful air pollution, protect our health, and help prevent the worst impacts of climate change. This legislation would require large buildings to report their energy consumption and meet minimum standards for energy efficiency.

More than half of all of the energy consumed in Massachusetts is used to provide electricity, heating, and cooling for residential and commercial buildings.¹ Burning fossil fuels like oil and gas for energy pollutes our air, harms our health, and contributes to the devastating impacts of global warming.

The first step toward a future powered entirely by clean, renewable energy is to reduce the amount of energy we use. The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy estimates that we can reduce energy consumption by 40 to 60 percent nationwide by mid-century, simply by using better technologies and eliminating waste across all sectors of our economy.²

We can reduce energy consumption in our buildings by installing more efficient appliances and lighting, reducing heat loss through walls, windows, and roofs (for example, with better insulation), and encouraging residents and employees to adopt more efficient behaviors.

The building code requires new buildings to be built to a minimum standard for energy efficiency, but there are currently no statewide requirements for existing buildings to become more efficient. A recent study in the city of Boston projected that 85% of the

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/data.php?sid=MA>

² <https://aceee.org/research-report/e121>

building square footage that would exist in 2050 has already been built.³ To protect our health and prevent the worst impacts of global warming, we must adopt strong policies to make Massachusetts' existing building stock more energy efficient.

These bills are modeled after policies implemented at the municipal level in Cambridge and Boston, as well as a law recently adopted in the District of Columbia. It would apply only to large buildings over 15,000 square feet in size. The legislation would:

- Require the owners of large buildings to report their energy use to the Department of Energy Resources each year, and make the information available to the public on a state website.
- Set energy efficiency standards for different categories of buildings.
- Require the owners of buildings that do not meet the energy efficiency standards to take action to reduce their energy consumption or carbon emissions by 20 percent over five years.
- Direct the Department of Energy Resources, the Department of Public Utilities, and utility companies to offer financial assistance for building owners to meet the energy efficiency standards.
- Allow municipalities to adopt stronger reporting requirements than the statewide requirements.

³ https://www.greenribboncommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL_CFB_SummaryRpt_FEB19.pdf